Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

~~Secret~~

3.5(c)

Latin American Trends

STAFF NOTES

~~Secret~~

CI SNLA 76-022
No. 0702-76
June 2, 1976

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

~~S E C R E T~~

LATIN AMERICAN TRENDS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Hemisphere Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

CONTENTS

June 2, 1976

Latin American Terrorism -
The Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR) . 1

NR

Argentina: Censorship Questioned 10

NR

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

SECRET

3.5(c)

Latin American Terrorism -
The Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR)

Shortly after the murder last month of the Bolivian ambassador to France, General Zenteno, we speculated that a South American guerrilla organization known as the Revolutionary Coordinating Junta (JCR) might be responsible for his death. So far the only leads developed by Paris police point to a similar conclusion--that some form of international terrorism was at work. Ballistic tests reportedly confirm that the gun used to kill Zenteno was the same weapon that wounded the Spanish military attache in Paris last fall.

Speculation about the activities of the Revolutionary Coordinating Junta in Paris was also fueled by an advertisement it placed in the May 9 issue of Le Monde entitled "Latin America Fights in Argentina." While the manifesto consists largely of the revolutionary cant common to such publications, it is the junta's first open attack in France. It focuses attention on the repressive activities of the new Argentine government and calls for a world-wide mobilization to free Edgardo Enriquez, the founder of the Chilean Movement of the Revolutionary Left and a member of the junta's secretariat, who was arrested by Argentine security forces on April 10. This may be the beginning of an international propaganda effort to discredit the military government--at least it serves to arouse the sympathies of the French left on this issue.

Information on the Coordinating Junta is fragmentary.

June 2, 1976

3.3(b)(1)

SECRET

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

and arrests of extremists in Paraguay, Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia confirm that such an organization does exist.

The junta may have originated during informal contacts between various South American leftist movements as early as 1968, but its formal existence was declared in a joint communique in February 1974 when representatives of guerrilla groups in Bolivia, Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina announced that they were uniting under the leadership of Roberto Santucho, the head of the Peoples Revolutionary Army in Argentina. In March 1975 a Paraguayan extremist organization reportedly joined the junta and later that month a meeting was held in Lisbon "to unify the Latin American revolutionary movements."

The junta is now said to have representatives in several European countries, including Portugal, Sweden, and France, but available evidence indicates that its headquarters are still in Argentina and that most of its funds, and probably its members, come from the Peoples Revolutionary Army.

Until now the Revolutionary Coordinating Junta has not taken credit for any terrorist operations, as has been the common practice of individual guerrilla organizations in South America. This does not mean that it has been inactive. On the contrary, it would appear [redacted] the organization takes its name seriously and exists for the purpose of coordinating activities and providing logistical support to its member groups. These 3.3(b)(1)

[redacted] 3.3(b)(1)

Despite the lack of hard data on assets or numbers involved, it would appear that the junta has

June 2, 1976

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

already achieved a status and operational capability that exceeds past efforts by Latin American revolutionaries to form intra-hemisphere or regional organizations which existed largely on paper. It will play an even more significant role if its member organizations decide to return to their own countries and to focus on foreign targets.

Security conditions in Uruguay, Bolivia, and Paraguay make it extremely difficult for extremists to operate effectively within national borders, and the Argentine military seems to be having some success against terrorist activities. Many students of international terrorism predict that instead of being destroyed or driven underground, the sophisticated guerrillas in Argentina will eventually turn their attention to Europe or perhaps conduct operations on a world-wide scale.

3.5(c)

June 2, 1976

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

3.5(c)

Argentina: Censorship Questioned

The junta's reticence and its imposition of media censorship have left the public ignorant of important matters and are creating potentially serious problems, according to the prestigious Buenos Aires Herald. In recent articles the paper has commented that the lack of hard information on the state of the government and its plans is fueling harmful speculation and could eventually lead to a loss of confidence in the regime.

The paper points out that the failure to put an end to or at least answer charges of human rights violations, for example, in effect confirms the worst fears of many who make such charges. The relative silence of the press reinforces the impression that the situation is indeed grave. The junta could make a start toward refuting the charges that it tacitly condones repressive tactics, suggests the Herald, by easing the restrictions on the press. If, on the other hand, the regime continues on its present path, it will likely be subjected, however unfairly, to the kind of international criticism that has hurt the Chilean military government.

The junta's bland public statements also encourage speculation that military unity is insufficient to permit confident action, according to the paper. This is dangerous, says the Herald, because unless refuted by strong policy making, the public--and potential military dissidents--will assume it to be so. The end result would be a self-fulfilling prophecy that the Herald and other news organs greatly fear.

President Videla and his moderate supporters are bound to find the Herald's questions unsettling.

June 2, 1976

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543

The junta does indeed seem somewhat immobilized by the enormity of the problems it confronts and by questions of military unity. After more than two months in power, the regime has relatively little to show for its efforts.

3.5(c)

June 2, 1976

Approved for Release: 2018/10/02 C06628543